

# Kunapipi

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## Poems

Betsy Warland

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## Poems

### Abstract

The shape of things and The map is not the Territory

# Betsy Warland

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## THE SHAPE OF THINGS

we heard it blocks away  
the noise fell a net  
pulled us to itself

thousands of birds in a park not entered  
a piece of green  
one-way screen from which we are  
seen not heard

stood in the midst of this and these black singing leaves  
watched by a last quarter moon of men  
hunched around obelisk *monument*:  
'mania, monster, admonish, amnesia'  
inscribed:

'is it nothing to you'

the birds  
why were they there? migration months away  
overhead  
three layers of winged choreography  
like watching your words fly the page  
or Penelope's tapestry she weaves and unweaves so no one can claim her

this park is not a square is  
triangle of Aphrodite, mound of Venus  
claiming herself symbol of our fecundity

on the eve of your fortieth year  
we witness this  
a man on a bicycle careens by shouts  
'this park is dangerous you know!'

we know

he doesn't realize  
the why has changed

'THE MAP IS NOT THE TERRITORY.'  
(Alfred Korzybski)  
*for K. & A.*

when did it happen  
was there a moment of mutation?

where did we originate  
are we a displaced civilization?

foreigners, we are foreigners  
we have not named this planet  
this is a second language we speak

forever fugitive  
we carry small packs on our backs  
alert, keeping  
hands free  
(a daily manoeuver rehearsed instinctively)

our country  
our bodies  
edge  
boundaries of viciousness:  
each country's conviction  
to colonize us